

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

extraordinary incidents that have in volume varied the daily round of parliamentary life. He has made great sketches, too, of many great parliamentarians, such as Disraeli, Mr. John Morley and Mr. John Lubbock. The book throws an interesting light upon the characters of many great distinguished men. It is an informal book. That it is highly entertaining goes without saying.

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After a year of secrecy, during which some pretty wild guesses have been made as to who was the author of "The Hague Ordains: Journal of a Russian Prisoner's Wife in Japan" (H. S. G. W. Co., New York), it is at last revealed that she is Miss Eliza Ruhamah Seidmore, a resident of Washington, a prominent member of National Geographic Society, author of a number of standard books, including "The Land of the Rising Sun," "Japan," "Westward to the Far East," "China, the Long-Lived Empire," "Winter India," etc. Of course, Miss Seidmore is in Japan during the war, but her book is of course based on fact, and the illustrations are from actual people.

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A volume entitled "Literary Reviews and Criticisms," by Prof. Prosser F. Frye, of the University of Nebraska, is now going through the press, and will appear under the Putnam imprint.

According to an article in the *Berlin Arena*, literary Italy has been divided into two parties by a novel called "The recently published by E. de' Alarano, a high school teacher, the first gun—a cold salute—was fired by the poet and philosopher, Arturo Graf, the leading Italian magazine, the *Nuova Antologia*. This was promptly followed by salvos by well-known critics in all the more important journals. The powder of the work was universally admitted, but the battle raged simply over the question raised by the novel: "Woman and the marriage," or, more fully, "Woman and her treatment of the subject took the form of the confession of a woman who had abandoned her husband and child because the man had proved to be a brute, and the law of the land afforded his wife no relief or redress. The book has been praised by Dora Melegari in the *Corriere della Sera* as the most honest and the foremost woman of Sweden, who is so that she believes it will 'do for Italy what Ibsen's 'Doll's House' did for Sweden."

duced something of the effect that lowered the "Robert Elsmere" of Humphry Ward. Now Mrs. Phelps offering, in a series of articles which being published at the instance of Elizabeth Jordan in Harper's Bazar, present theories upon immortality and future life; and those readers who remember that it was this same interest "The Gates Ajar" that first made

The best fiction of to-day has recognized the fact that the world has preceded it, though the artist has followed the line of life rather than an arranged scheme. It is not manifest in obvious features. It has more varied traits, instead of a few, emphatically pronounced, merely typical features. It has a dramatic interest, intellectually and poetically, but it is not so much concerned to change to follow the pattern which nature itself makes, yet in its course unfolds novel surprises. Above all, it has a spontaneous play of human activities, and it is not so much concerned to give a specific humor which excites to laughter or even suppressed merriment, but to like every other quality of the modern world, and to give a new and interesting looking articulate distinction, concerned with the ever-varying course of the writer's thought and feeling. Humors are not so much the index of the life of life—the index of its flexibility, of tenderness, mercy, and forgiveness.

J. M. Alden, in Harper's.